THE GREAT WAR FOR THE EMPIRE
Objectives:

- We will study the three distinct phases of the conflict between the French and the British that resulted in the French and Indian War.
- We will examine the impact the war had on the colonies and the British empire.
- We will examine the impact the war had on the Native Americans.
Pro_20:18 Every purpose is established by counsel: and with good advice make war.
Three Distinct Phases

- French and Indian War lasted nearly nine years and it proceeded in three distinct phases.
- The first of these phases lasted from the Fort Necessity debacle in 1754 until the expansion of the war to Europe in 1756.
- It was primarily a local North American conflict which the English colonists managed largely on their own.
Three Distinct Phases

• The British provided modest assistance during this period, but they provided it ineptly that it had little impact on the struggle.

• The British fleet failed to prevent the landing of large French reinforcements in Canada.

• The newly appointed commander in chief of the British Army in America, General Edward Braddock was sent to retake the site Washington had lost the battle at Fort Necessity and failed miserably and died in an ambush.
Three Distinct Phases

- The local colonial forces were preoccupied with defending themselves against raids on their western settlements by the Indians of the Ohio Valley.
- Virtually all of the tribes except Iroquois now allied with the French, having interpreted the defeat of the Virginians at Fort Duquesne as evidence of British weakness.
- Even the Iroquois, who were nominally allied with the British, remained fearful of antagonizing the French.
- Many English settlers withdrew to the east to the Allegheny Mountains to escape the hostilities.
Three Distinct Phases

• The Second phase of the struggle began in 1756 when the governments of France and England formally opened hostilities and truly an international conflict (the Seven Year’s War) began.

• In Europe, the war was marked by a realignment within the complex system of alliances.
Three Distinct Phases

• The fighting now spread to the West Indies, India, and Europe itself.

• But the principal struggle remained the one in North America, where so far the English had suffered nothing but frustration and defeat.
Three Distinct Phases

- Beginning in 1757, William Pitt, the English Secretary of State (and future prime minister) began to transform the war effort in America by bringing it fully under British control.
- Pitt himself began planning military commanders and issuing orders to the colonists.
- Military recruitment had slowed dramatically in America after the defeat of Braddock.
- To replenish the army, British commanders began forcibly enlisting colonists (impressment).
Three Distinct Phases

- Officers also began to seize supplies and equipment from local farmers and tradesmen and compelled colonists to offer shelter to British troops all generally without compensation.
- The Americans had long been accustomed to running their own affairs and had been fighting for over two years without much assistance and direction from the British.
- They resented these new impositions and resisted them at times, as in a 1757 riot in New York.
- By early 1758, the friction between the British authorities and the colonists was threatening to bring the war effort to a halt.
Three Distinct Phases

- 1758, Pitt initiated the third and final phase of the war by relaxing many of the policies that Americans found obnoxious.
- Pitt agreed to reimburse the colonists for all supplies requisitioned by the army.
- He returned control over military recruitment to the colonies (resulted increased dramatic enlistments).
- And he dispatched large numbers of additional troops to America.
Tide Turns:

• Finally the tide of battle began to turn in England’s favor.
• The French was always outnumbered to the British colonists; after 1756 the French colonies suffered as well from a series of poor harvests.
Tide Turns:

• As a result, they were unable to sustain their early military successes.
• The British regulars (who did the bulk of the actual fighting) and the colonial militias seized one French stronghold after another.
• Two brilliant Generals, Jeffrey Amherst and James Wolfe helped capture fort after fort including Fort Duquesne without a fight.
• General Wolfe helped led to the taking of Quebec.
Tide Turns:

• The British also committed atrocities such as uprooting several thousand French inhabitants from Nova Scotia and spreading them out in the English colonies.

• English and colonial troops inflicted even worse atrocities on Indian allies of the French offering “scalping bounties” to those who could bring back evidence of having killed a native.
Peace Comes:

• Peace finally came after the accession of George III to the British throne and the resignation of Pitt, who unlike the new King, wanted to continue hostilities.

• The British achieved most of Pitt’s aims in the Peace of Paris signed in 1763.

• Under its terms, the French ceded to Great Britain some of the West Indian Islands and most of their colonies in India.
Peace Comes:

• The French also transferred Canada and all other French territory east of the Mississippi except New Orleans to Great Britain.

• The French ceded New Orleans and their claims west of the Mississippi to Spain thus surrendering all title to the mainland of North America.
Impact on the British Empire & Colonies

• The French and Indian War had profound effects on the British Empire and the American colonies.
• It greatly expanded England’s territorial claims in the New World.
• It greatly enlarged Britain’s debt; financing the vast war had been a major drain on the treasury.
Impact on the British Empire & Colonies

• Also generated substantial resentment toward Americans among British leaders, many of whom were contemptuous of the colonists for what they considered American military ineptitude during the war.

• They were angry as well that the colonists had made so few financial contributions to a struggle waged largely for American benefit.
Impact on the British Empire & Colonies

• They were particularly bitter that some colonial merchants had been selling food and other goods to the French in the West Indies conflict.

• All these factors combined to persuade many English leaders that a major reorganization of the empire, giving London increased authority over the colonies, would be necessary in the aftermath of the war.
Impact on the Colonists:

• It forced them in concert against a common foe.
• The friction of 1756-1757 over British requisition and impressment policies and the 1758 return of authority to the colonial assemblies, established an important precedent in the minds of the colonists:
• It seemed to confirm the illegitimacy of English interference to local affairs.
Impact on the Colonists:

- The American men who served in the colonial forces, the war was an important socializing experience.
- The colonial troops generally viewed themselves as the people’s army of communal volunteers while the British were seen as arrogant and arbitrary use of power.
Impact on Indians:

- For Indians in the Ohio Valley, the British victory was disastrous.
- Those tribes that had allied themselves with the French were now hated by the victorious British.
- The Iroquois Confederacy who allied itself with Britain faced slightly better.
- English officials saw them as passive in helping during the war and was seen as duplicitous.
- The alliance unraveled with the British and the confederacy crumbled from within.
- Increasingly divided and outnumbered they would seldom again be a rival to the major powers of Europe in the Americas.